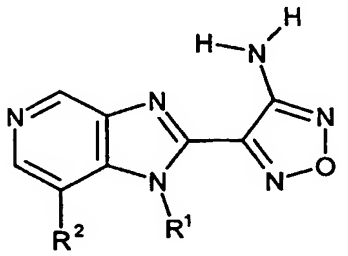
What is claimed is:

1. A compound according to formula (I) hereinbelow:

The present invention thus provides compounds of the general formula (I)



(I)

and physiologically acceptable salts wherein,

R^1 is represents a group selected from C_{1-6} alkyl optionally substituted by a group selected from the group consisting of optionally substituted phenyl, C_{3-7}cycloalkyl, heteroaryl, heterocyclyl, NH_2, R^4R^5N, acylamino, hydroxy, $CONR^4R^5$, NR^4COR^5, $SO_2NR^4R^5$, $NR^4SO_2R^5$, $OalkNR^4R^5$, or $SalkNR^4R^5$ group, phenyl optionally substituted with OC_{1-6} alkyl optionally substituted by a group selected from the group consisting of optionally substituted phenyl, C_{3-7}cycloalkyl, heteroaryl, heterocyclyl, NH_2, R^4R^5N, acylamino, hydroxy, $CONR^4R^5$, NR^4COR^5, $SO_2NR^4R^5$, $NR^4SO_2R^5$, $OalkNR^4R^5$, or $SalkNR^4R^5$ group, heteroaryl optionally substituted by a group selected from optionally substituted phenyl, C_{3-7}cycloalkyl, heteroaryl, heterocyclyl, NH_2, R^4R^5N, acylamino, hydroxy, $CONR^4R^5$, NR^4COR^5, $SO_2NR^4R^5$, $NR^4SO_2R^5$, $OalkNR^4R^5$, or $SalkNR^4R^5$ group, heterocyclyl, NH_2, $NHCH_2CH(CH_3)_2$, $NH(CH_2)_2C(CH_3)_3$, $NHCH(CH_3)_2$, $NH(CH_2)_2CH(CH_3)_2$, $NHCH_2$aryl, acylamino, hydroxy, $CONR^4R^5$, NR^4COR^5, $SO_2NR^4R^5$, $NR^4SO_2R^5$), heteroaryl, cycloalkyl, cycloalkylalkyl, heterocyclyl;

R^2 represents hydrogen, F, Cl, Br, I, C_{1-6} alkyl optionally substituted by a group selected from the group consisting of optionally substituted phenyl, C_{3-7}cycloalkyl, heteroaryl, heterocyclyl, NH_2, R^4R^5N, acylamino, hydroxy, CO_2R^4, $CONR^4R^5$, NR^4COR^5, NR^4CSR^5, $SO_2NR^4R^5$, $NR^4SO_2R^5$, $OalkNR^4R^5$ optionally substituted phenyl, heteroaryl, heterocyclyl, $CONR^4R^5$, $SO_2NR^4R^5$, NR^3R^6, $S(O)_nR^3$;

R^3 and R^6, independently, represent a group selected from hydrogen, C_{1-6} alkyl, C_{3-7} cycloalkyl wherein R^3 and R^6 can be tied into a ring;

R^4 and R^5, independently, represent a group selected from hydrogen, C_{1-6} alkyl, C_{3-7} cycloalkyl, C_{3-7} cycloalkylalkyl, aryl, aralkyl, heteroaryl, heteroarylalkyl, heterocyclyl or heterocyclylalkyl;

n is 0, 1, or 2; and

alk is a C_{2-4} straight or branched alkylene chain.

2. A compound according to claim 1 selected from the group consisting of:

4-(1-Ethyl-7-{[3-(methyloxy)phenyl]thio}-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-2-yl)-furazan-3-amine;

Phenylmethyl 4-({4-[2-(4-amino-furazan-3-yl)-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-1-yl]phenyl}oxy)-1-piperidinecarboxylate;

4-[1-(4-{[(2-Methyl-1,3-thiazol-4-yl)methyl]oxy}phenyl)-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-2-yl]-furazan-3-amine;

4-{1-[4-({[2-(4-Chlorophenyl)-1,3-thiazol-4-yl]methyl}oxy)phenyl]-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-2-yl}-furazan-3-amine;

4-[1-(4-{[(5-Phenyl-1,2,4-oxadiazol-3-yl)methyl]oxy}phenyl)-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-2-yl]-furazan-3-amine;

4-[1-(4-{[(5-Methyl-3-isoxazolyl)methyl]oxy}phenyl)-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-2-yl]-furazan-3-amine;

4-[1-(4-{[(Methylsulfonyl)methyl]oxy}phenyl)-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-2-yl]-furazan-3-amine;

2-(4-Amino-furazan-3-yl)-1-ethyl-*N*-[4-(methyloxy)phenyl]-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-7-amine;

2-(4-Amino-furazan-3-yl)-1-ethyl-*N*-(4-piperidinylmethyl)-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridine-7-sulfonamide;

4-(7-{[4-(Aminomethyl)-1-piperidinyl]sulfonyl}-1-ethyl-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-2-yl)-furazan-3-amine;

4-[1-Ethyl-7-(1-piperazinylsulfonyl)-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-2-yl]-furazan-3-amine;

2-(4-Amino-furazan-3-yl)-1-ethyl-*N*-4-piperidinyl-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridine-7-sulfonamide;

2-(4-Amino-furazan-3-yl)-1-ethyl-*N*-3-pyrrolidinyl-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridine-7-sulfonamide;

N-(*trans*-4-Aminocyclohexyl)-2-(4-amino-furazan-3-yl)-1-ethyl-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridine-7-sulfonamide;

4-(7-{[(3*R*)-3-Amino-1-pyrrolidinyl]sulfonyl}-1-ethyl-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-2-yl)-furazan-3-amine;

2-(4-Amino-furazan-3-yl)-1-ethyl-*N*-(phenylmethyl)-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridine-7-sulfonamide;

N-{[4-(Aminomethyl)cyclohexyl]methyl}-2-(4-amino-furazan-3-yl)-1-ethyl-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridine-7-sulfonamide;

2-(4-{[2-(4-Amino-furazan-3-yl)-1-ethyl-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-7-yl]sulfonyl}-1-piperazinyl)ethanol;

N-(2-Aminoethyl)-2-(4-amino-furazan-3-yl)-1-ethyl-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridine-7-sulfonamide;

4-{1-Ethyl-7-[(4-methyl-1-piperazinyl)sulfonyl]-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-2-yl}-furazan-3-amine;

4-[({[2-(4-Amino-furazan-3-yl)-1-ethyl-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-7-yl]sulfonyl}amino)methyl]benzoic acid;

2-(4-Amino-furazan-3-yl)-1-ethyl-*N*-[3-(methylamino)propyl]-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridine-7-sulfonamide;

2-(4-Amino-furazan-3-yl)-*N*-(3-aminopropyl)-1-ethyl-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridine-7-sulfonamide;

N-(4-Aminobutyl)-2-(4-amino-furazan-3-yl)-1-ethyl-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridine-7-sulfonamide;

4-[1-(1-Methyl-1,2,3,4-tetrahydro-7-isoquinolinyl)-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-2-yl]-furazan-3-amine;

4-[1-Ethyl-7-(2-pyridinylthio)-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-2-yl]-furazan-3-amine,

1,1-Dimethylethyl (3*R*)-3-[({[2-(4-amino-furazan-3-yl)-1-ethyl-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-7-yl]carbonyl}amino)methyl]-1-pyrrolidinecarboxylate;

N-[2-({4-[2-(4-Amino-furazan-3-yl)-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-1-yl]phenyl}oxy)ethyl]-*N*-methylglycine;

1,1-Dimethylethyl (3*S*)-3-[({[2-(4-amino-furazan-3-yl)-1-ethyl-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-7-yl]carbonyl}amino)methyl]-1-pyrrolidinecarboxylate;

4-(1-{4-[(1-Methyl-3-pyrrolidinyl)oxy]phenyl}-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-2-yl)-furazan-3-amine;

4-[1-Ethyl-7-(4-pyridinylthio)-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-2-yl]-furazan-3-amine;

1,1-Dimethylethyl 4-({4-[2-(4-amino-furazan-3-yl)-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-1-yl]phenyl}oxy)-1-piperidinecarboxylate;

4-(1-Ethyl-7-{[4-(methyloxy)phenyl]sulfinyl}-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-2-yl)-furazan-3-amine;

2-(4-Amino-furazan-3-yl)-*N*-[2-(2-chlorophenyl)-2-(dimethylamino)ethyl]-1-ethyl-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridine-7-carboxamide;

2-(4-Amino-furazan-3-yl)-*N*-[4-(dimethylamino)butyl]-1-ethyl-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridine-7-carboxamide;

4-[1-Ethyl-7-(1-pyrrolidinyl)-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-2-yl]-furazan-3-amine;

({4-[2-(4-Amino-furazan-3-yl)-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-1-yl]phenyl}oxy)acetic acid;

1,1-Dimethylethyl ({4-[2-(4-amino-furazan-3-yl)-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-1-yl]phenyl}oxy)acetate;

4-{1-[4-(4-Piperidinyloxy)phenyl]-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-2-yl}-furazan-3-amine;

4-{7-[3-(1-Aminoethyl)phenyl]-1-ethyl-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-2-yl}-furazan-3-amine;

2-(4-Amino-furazan-3-yl)-1-ethyl-*N*-[(3*S*)-3-pyrrolidinylmethyl]-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridine-7-carboxamide;

2-(4-Amino-furazan-3-yl)-1-ethyl-*N*-[(3*R*)-3-pyrrolidinylmethyl]-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridine-7-carboxamide;

2-(4-Amino-furazan-3-yl)-1-ethyl-*N*-(tetrahydro-2*H*-pyran-4-yl)-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridine-7-carboxamide;

N-{[3-(Aminomethyl)cyclohexyl]methyl}-2-(4-amino-furazan-3-yl)-1-ethyl-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridine-7-carboxamide;

4-[({[2-(4-Amino-furazan-3-yl)-1-ethyl-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-7-yl]carbonyl}amino)methyl]benzoic acid;

2-(4-Amino-furazan-3-yl)-*N*-[4-(diethylamino)-1-methylbutyl]-1-ethyl-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridine-7-carboxamide;

2-(4-Amino-furazan-3-yl)-1-ethyl-*N*-{2-[4-(methyloxy)phenyl]-2-phenylethyl}-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridine-7-carboxamide;

N-[2-({4-[2-(4-Amino-furazan-3-yl)-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-1-yl]phenyl}oxy)ethyl]-*N*-methylacetamide;

N-[2-({4-[2-(4-Amino-furazan-3-yl)-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-1-yl]phenyl}oxy)ethyl]-*N*-methylmethanesulfonamide;

N-[2-({4-[2-(4-Amino-furazan-3-yl)-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-1-yl]phenyl}oxy)ethyl]-*N'*-phenylurea;

N-[2-({4-[2-(4-Amino-furazan-3-yl)-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-1-yl]phenyl}oxy)ethyl]-*N'*-ethylurea;

Methyl [4-({4-[2-(4-amino-furazan-3-yl)-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-1-yl]phenyl}oxy)-1-piperidinyl]acetate;

4-[1-(4-{[2-(Phenylamino)ethyl]oxy}phenyl)-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-2-yl]-furazan-3-amine;

[4-({4-[2-(4-Amino-furazan-3-yl)-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-1-yl]phenyl}oxy)-1-piperidinyl]acetic acid;

1-{[2-(4-Amino-furazan-3-yl)-1-ethyl-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-7-yl]carbonyl}-4-piperidinamine;

2-(4-{[2-(4-Amino-furazan-3-yl)-1-ethyl-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-7-yl]carbonyl}-1-piperazinyl)ethanol;

N-(4-{[2-(4-Amino-furazan-3-yl)-1-ethyl-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-7-yl]thio}phenyl)acetamide;

N-(4-{[2-(4-Amino-furazan-3-yl)-1-ethyl-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-7-yl]sulfinyl}phenyl)acetamide;

4-[7-{[(3*S*)-3-Amino-1-pyrrolidinyl]carbonyl}-1-(4-{[2-(dimethylamino)ethyl]oxy}phenyl)-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-2-yl]-furazan-3-amine;

1-{[2-(4-Amino-furazan-3-yl)-1-ethyl-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-7-yl]carbonyl}-4-piperidinecarboxamide;

4-[1-(4-{[2-(Dimethylamino)ethyl]oxy}phenyl)-7-(1-pyrrolidinylcarbonyl)-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-2-yl]-furazan-3-amine;

4-(7-{[(3*S*)-3-Amino-1-pyrrolidinyl]carbonyl}-1-phenyl-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-2-yl)-furazan-3-amine;

4-[1-Phenyl-7-(1-pyrrolidinylcarbonyl)-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-2-yl]-furazan-3-amine;

4-(1-{4-[(3,3-Dimethylbutyl)amino]phenyl}-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-2-yl)-furazan-3-amine;

4-(1-{4-[(2-Methylpropyl)amino]phenyl}-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-2-yl)-furazan-3-amine;

4-(1-{4-[(1-Methylethyl)amino]phenyl}-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-2-yl)-furazan-3-amine;

4-(1-{4-[(3-Methylbutyl)amino]phenyl}-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-2-yl)-furazan-3-amine;

4-(1-{4-[(Phenylmethyl)amino]phenyl}-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-2-yl)-furazan-3-amine;

4-[2-(4-amino-furazan-3-yl)-1H-imidazo[4,5-c]pyridin-1-yl]-N-methylbenzamide;

4-[2-(4-amino-furazan-3-yl)-1H-imidazo[4,5-c]pyridin-1-yl]-N-(1-methylethyl)benzamide;

4-{1-[4-(1-pyrrolidinylcarbonyl)phenyl]-1H-imidazo[4,5-c]pyridin-2-yl}-furazan-3-amine; and

4-[2-(4-amino-furazan-3-yl)-1H-imidazo[4,5-c]pyridin-1-yl]benzamide.

3. A method of inhibiting Rho-kinases comprising administering to a subject in need thereof a safe and effective amount of a compound according to claim 1.

4. A method according to claim 3 wherein the disease is selected from the group consisting of:

hypertension, chronic and congestive heart failure, ischemic angina, cardiac hypertrophy and fibrosis, restenosis, chronic renal failure, atherosclerosis, asthma, male erectile dysfunctions, female sexual dysfunction and over-active bladder syndrome, stroke, multiple sclerosis, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease,

amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, inflammatory pain, rheumatoid arthritis, irritable bowel syndrome, inflammatory bowel disease, Crohn's diseases, indications requiring neuronal regeneration, inducing new axonal growth and axonal rewiring across lesions within the CNS, spinal cord injury, acute neuronal injury, Parkinsons disease, Alzheimers disease, cancer, tumor metastasis, viral and bacterial infection, insulin resistance and diabetes.

5. A method according to claim 4 wherein the disease is selected from the group consisting of:

hypertension, chronic and congestive heart failure, ischemic angina, asthma, male erectile dysfunction, female sexual dysfunction, stroke, inflammatory bowel diseases, spinal cord injury, glaucoma and tumor metastasis.

6. A method according to claim 4 wherein the disease is selected from the group consisting of:

hypertension, chronic and congestive heart failure and ischemic angina.

7. A pharmaceutical composition comprising a compound according to claim 1 and a suitable carrier.